

Ilbe Wil-
1899

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PART FIVE.

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Pages.

MARCH 26

DECORATIONS FOR STATE

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DECORATIONS FOR STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY.

Four Composition Subjects Chosen to Typify the Four Principal Colleges of the University.

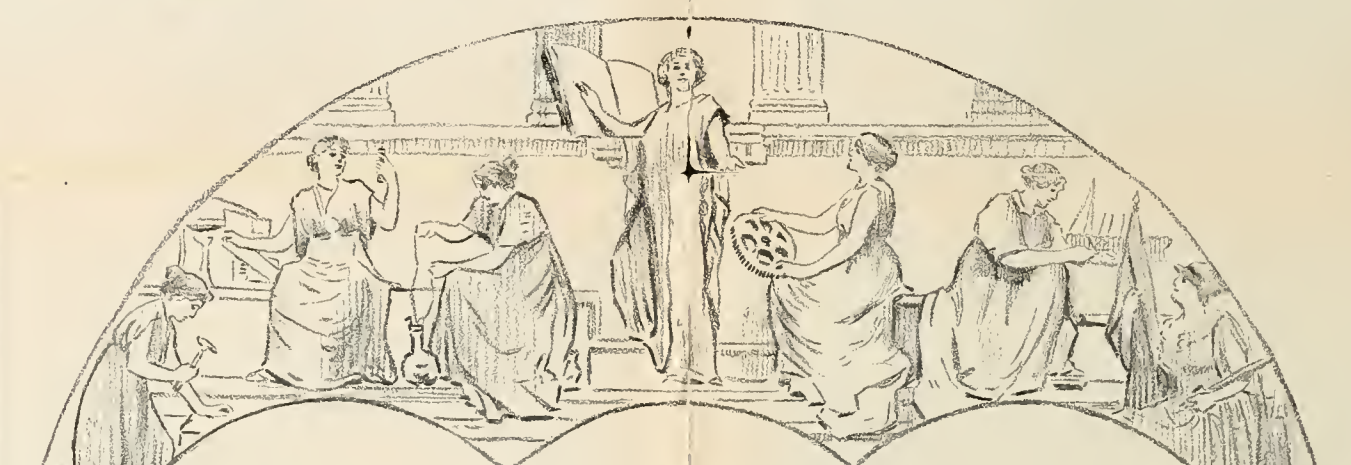
Artist Wells, Selected to Paint the Frescoes for the Rotunda, Has About Completed His Work.



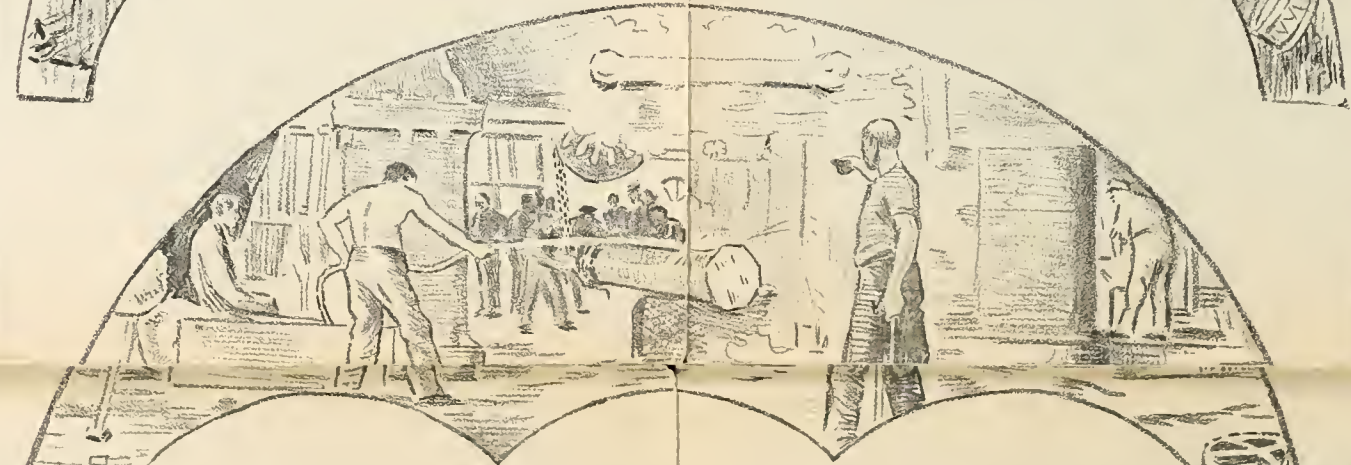
ARCADIA



THE SACRED WOOD OF THE MUSES



LABORATORY OF MINERVA



THE FORGE OF VULCAN

MR. NEWTON A. WELLS is now at work painting the frescoes in the Rotunda of the State University Library at Urbana. The work was awarded upon competition about a year and a half ago. The committee selecting Mr. Wells' designs as being the most decorative and especially adapted to the object for which they were designed.

The necessary data, plans, and elevations, architect's specifications, etc., were furnished him and in due time small designs in water color were sent on, upon which a favorable decision was passed, and Mr. Wells at once set to work in his Paris atelier to make the working drawings of the four great frescoes included in the commission.

The frescoes are to be placed on the upper walls of the rotunda, which is entered after passing the vestibule and off which are the reading-room and stackroom. The rotunda is oblong and the panels, which form a sort of frieze, are of two lengths, two will be 37 1/2 and the other two 22 1/2 feet long, and each about 12 feet in height, the figures in the composition to be life size.

FOUR SUBJECTS.

The four composition subjects chosen will typify the four principal colleges of the university, literature and arts, agriculture, engineering, and science. "The Sacred Wood of the Muses" is the title of the first composition. It is a classical subject, containing about twenty-five figures, representing philosophy, poetry, music, and art. The studies for the landscape for this work were made in the garden of the Luxembourg and at Versailles. The scene represents the classic age and Plato, Homer, Aristotle, and others are grouped, each with his followers, who are earnestly learning the lessons expounded by their worthy masters.

To represent agriculture Mr. Wells has composed a pastoral called "Arcadia," which is treated also from the classical standpoint, the figure being in the old Greek costume. The picture typifies the return of the harvesters at the close of day, the first fruits, as to speak, of the harvest season. Domestic animals are also introduced. The professional is also typical of the different stages of life. On the extreme left are two small children in the lead, and closely following are a young woman and her lover bearing garlands of vine and clusters of purple grapes.

FAMOUS MODELS.

A man and a woman bearing aloft a little child typify the family life, and the old man with the scepter is a prominent figure. The model who posed for this figure is one of the best and most noted in Paris, having posed for Puvis de Chavannes for more than forty years. The introduction of the domestic animals is a striking feature, and an interesting item in regard to the exhibition which is being held by a youth, as that Mr. Wells obtained the drawing for it at the horse market in Paris from which Eosa Bonheur painted her noted picture, "The Horse Fair."

The entire composition is graceful and harmonious and the coloring, in common with all the frescoes, warm and effective. The fresco representing science is called the "Laboratory of Minerva." The subject, literature and the figures are arranged accordingly. An allegorical figure of science stands in the center, and the figures around her are engaged in various scientific pursuits. The figures are drawn in a simple, direct, and unadorned style, and the composition is a study in the use of light and shadow.

MODERN VULCAN.

Each of the four frescoes is a study in the use of light and shadow. The master of the fresco, a prominent figure, stands in the foreground, and the various workers are distributed at their proper places around the forge, the master directing the work. The figures are drawn in a simple, direct, and unadorned style, and the composition is a study in the use of light and shadow.

ing of the subject was made at Urbana, where is located one of the largest foundries in the country.

PRELIMINARY WORK.

The first step in preparing these frescoes is by making an inventory of the drawings. The drawings are made in Paris, and the artist, Mr. Wells, is now at work in his Paris atelier. The drawings are made in Paris, and the artist, Mr. Wells, is now at work in his Paris atelier. The drawings are made in Paris, and the artist, Mr. Wells, is now at work in his Paris atelier.

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LIBRARY IS WELL STOCKED.

Facilities for Study Are Excellent Now, but Will Be Greatly Improved Later. The library that will be adorned by these decorations had only a few months ago, 30,000 volumes and 6,500 pamphlets. The collection has been selected with reference to the literary and scientific studies required in the several courses. The large library building is open throughout the day for study and reference work. On the same floor as the library is the reading-room of the university well supplied with daily papers and the more important weekly and monthly periodicals, both literary and scientific. The new library building will soon enable the university to offer its members greatly increased library facilities.

the university. They contain over 6,000 volumes and 15,000 pamphlets. These are the 150 series of periodicals.

The institution was incorporated under the name of the Illinois Industrial University on the 24th day of February 1867 and placed under the control of a Board of Trustees consisting of the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the President of the State Board of Agriculture as ex-officio members, and twenty-eight citizens appointed by the Governor. The chief executive officer, usually named President, was elected Regent, and it was made ex-officio a member of the board and presiding officer of the Board of Trustees and of the faculty.

The university was opened to students on March 2, 1868. Instruction began given in algebra, geometry, physics, history, rhetoric, and Latin. At this time work on the farm and gardens around the building was compulsory for all students, but the following year comp. labor was discontinued, save where made a part of class instruction. In the autumn of 1868 a chemical laboratory was fitted up and practical work began. A botanical laboratory was introduced the following year. In January 1870 a notable advance in instruction was made by the fitting up of a temporary mechanical shop with tools and machinery and in this little structure, originally built for a carpenter shop, was begun the first shop instruction in an American university. In the summer of 1871 a large brick building the present engineering laboratory was equipped for students and work in wood and iron. At the Philadelphia Centennial